AGRC Policy and Procedure Manual	Title: Communications - Appendix A	
Approval Date: 12-10-2022	Number: 5.0	Rev: 5

OPERATING PROCEDURES
"The Rules of the Air"

A. Standards and Procedures

These are operating procedures for members of the AGRC, for both using a repeater system or simplex (direct) communications. Members are required to follow these procedures and all FCC regulations including, but not limited to, the following:

1. Authorized Users: Only licensed radio operators, in accordance with the below restrictions, may utilize the indicated frequencies.

    a. GMRS: Only those with a GMRS license and their immediate family, in accordance with FCC regulations 95.1705(c), are allowed to use AGRC repeater systems or utilize GMRS frequencies.

    b. Commercial Frequencies: Members utilizing commercial frequencies licensed to the AGRC are authorized to use various modes and methods as shown in the AESG channel plan. Only officers or AESG members may use the commercial frequencies for official use only – no personal communications. GMRS call signs are not to be used on the commercial frequencies. The AGRC FCC call sign WRQA424 will be used and only one station needs to identify. Other stations will use tactical call signs. In accordance with FCC Part 90, identification must be in analog voice or Morse code every 15 minutes.

2. Identification:

    a. Every member must use their designated FCC Call Sign at intervals prescribed by the FCC. For GMRS licensees, that is at the end of any conversation and every 15 minutes during longer conversations. For users of commercial frequencies, see paragraph 1(b) above.

    b. Use of the full call sign at the beginning of a conversation is not necessary since that is not an FCC requirement. HOWEVER, we do require that stations identify at the beginning of the conversation with their suffix (the numerical part of their FCC call sign) and if no contact, then sign off with their full call sign. How that works is something like this example:

    "714 this is 903" (In this case, I am calling fictional user WQIV714.) If there is no answer I might repeat it a couple times: "714 this is 903. Are you there, Bill?" If no answer, then I would sign off saying: "No Contact WQRV903 clear" or just "Nothing heard WQRV903 clear."

This lets everyone on the repeater know who I am and that I am done trying to reach "Bill". The channel is now open for use by others. Each user has their own variation on this protocol, but everyone in the club must use this protocol or an equivalent of it without exception.

c. Family members may use unit numbers or tactical IDs (like "base", "mobile 1", "mobile 2", etc) when calling other units under the same license. However, at a minimum of every 15 minutes and at the end of the conversation, all units in a conversation MUST identify with their full FCC call sign and unit number. If a family member is communicating with a station not on the same license, then all parties must also use their full call sign and unit number, if any.

d. If you transmit for a brief period of time, for testing, to check if you can hit or "kerchunk" the repeater, or for any other reason, you are always required to identify with your full call sign.   This is a courtesy to others and a requirement of FCC regulations.

3. Authorized Equipment: Only FCC certified radio equipment (Part 90 or 95) may be used by AGRC members. All equipment should have narrow band (12.5 KHz) and wide band (25 KHz) capability, unless wide band is not available. The following radio equipment, systems or emissions are not authorized for use on AGRC repeaters:

a. Converted or out of band Amateur radios.

b. Formerly FCC authorized dual-use FRS/GMRS radios.

c. Currently FCC authorized FRS radio equipment.

d. Digital emissions, except those specifically authorized by the FCC.

e. Any other non-compliant systems or equipment.

4. Initiating a Call: Due to the multiple sub-audible codes that are utilized by our repeater systems and simplex channels, it is necessary to use the following steps when initiating a call. This will lessen the possibility of interfering with a communication already in progress. The below can be remembered with the acronym "MALT".

a. Monitor – Always use the "monitor" button so that the received tone is deactivated and all stations can be heard.

b. Assess – Assess the channel. Check that you are on the right tone and

frequency pair.

    c.   Listen- for any communication in progress.

    d. Talk – For repeater systems, it is a good idea to wait a second after pressing the PTT button and then speak. It is also good protocol to announce the channel and tone for those who have their radios in scan mode.

5.   <u>Communication Guidelines</u>:

    a.   Always yield to emergency traffic.

    b.   Be polite and courteous to other radio users of the repeater. There are all different levels of radio experience among the users.

    c.   Do not cause interference to any other station using the repeater. It is the responsibility of every member to check the repeater or simplex frequency before transmitting, by using the "monitor" button on the radio. There may be other CTCSS or DCS tones in use and it is important to check, so that users do not "step on" other conversations that are in progress.

    d.   Always let the repeater "hang time" drop before taking your turn. This resets the time-out timer AND gives others time to break in if they need to make a call. Wait at least 1 second prior to speaking after pressing the push to talk button. This is important with linked repeaters.

    e.   Keep conversations brief and to the point as much as possible. Remember, others may be waiting to use the repeater.

6.   <u>Channels, tones, and simplex communications</u>:

    a.   There is a Standardized Channel Plan which has been developed for the convenience of AGRC members. Members are encouraged to use the Channel Plan but are not required to do so. Members may use the channel numbers designated in the Channel Plan or use the last digits of the GMRS frequency. For example, the repeater on 462.550 MHz is known as the "550" repeater.

    b.   Remember that each code used, such as 550 A or 550 B, are actually using the same channel (frequency pair). Use A for general purposes and B for calling and short conversations only. If a conversation will be longer than a few minutes, consider 550 A.

    c. If within simplex (direct) range and wish to have a longer conversation change to a simplex channel. You may also use a different club repeater, if not in use.

    d. Do not mix repeater and simplex use. Those using a repeater should not communicate with a station on simplex. Switch to simplex (if within range) or have both stations operate on the repeater.

7. Prohibited Communications:

    a. No user may identify using a false call sign, tactical ID, or unit number of another station.

    b. No Business-related communications are allowed on AGRC repeater systems. They are for personal use only.

    c. Any profane or indecent language or meaning is prohibited.

    d. Members will not discuss confidential information about repeater tones, codes or other proprietary information of AGRC with any person over the air. (Mandatory minimum penalty of membership suspension.)

    e. All voice communications using AGRC repeaters must be in the English language only. Other languages are prohibited.

8. Reporting Problems:

    a. If there is a serious issue and one of the control operators does not hear it, please report it to a control operator, or AGRC Officer, so that it can be dealt with. In the event of interference to a repeater or a malfunction, any control operator or AGRC Officer may temporarily shut down repeater operations. When a repeater is shut down, all other officers will be notified.

    b. All transmissions may be recorded and archived for FCC enforcement (choice of the club, not an FCC requirement) so a date and time of the infraction would be helpful in a control operator finding the exact record quickly. Ongoing interference problems may also be reported on the Club website in the proper forum.

    c. Control operators are designated by the Communications Officer, Tim WQRV903, and include Randy WPRR517 and Chris WQWI942. When needed, control operators may turn tones on or off, connect or disconnect links and take any other action with regard to the operation of repeaters.

9. <u>Repeater failure</u>: If an apparent repeater failure occurs, wait one minute in case it has just timed out. If there is still no response from the repeater, go to the fallback plan or use another repeater.   Fallback plan: Use direct mode (talk-around) and attempt to make contact on the repeater output frequency. If no control operator or officer is aware of the problem, please contact them via radio or phone.

B. Reference

Websites for Reference

AGRC Website: www.azgmrs.org

FCC Regulations – Part 95E: https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-47/chapter-I/subchapter-D/part-95/subpart-E?toc=1